

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A split connecting rod comprising:  
a crank-pin hole;  
a valley provided on an inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole; and  
a fracture starting point groove provided at the base portion of said valley;  
wherein

~~upper and lower inner surfaces of the fracture starting point groove define an angle of about 10 degrees or less with respect to a predetermined fracture plane passing from a shaft center of the crank pin hole through a bottom portion in a bottom surface of the fracture starting point groove~~

the fracture starting point groove includes a pair of walls parallel to a predetermined fracture plane, and a bottom surface which connects the pair of parallel walls and forms an arc with a radius of R; and

the valley forms an angle with respect to the predetermined fracture plane greater than ~~the an~~ angle that the ~~upper and lower inner surfaces~~pair of walls of the fracture starting point groove define with respect to the predetermined fracture plane.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein a width of said fracture starting point groove is less than a width of said valley.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein said valley is provided such that said base portion is located at a position where a ratio of a depth of said fracture starting point groove to a shortest distance from an opening of said fracture starting point groove to a bolt hole is about 70% or more.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, further comprising a bearing locking groove provided on said inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole, wherein said valley is provided on the inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole at a position opposite to a position where the bearing locking groove is provided on said inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 4, wherein said bearing locking groove includes a pair of concave portions located at positions that are deviated in the circumferential direction of said inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 5, wherein a width of said valley in the circumferential direction of said inner circumferential surface is less than a width of the pair of concave portions of said bearing locking groove in the circumferential direction of said inner circumferential surface.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the split connecting rod is a nut-less connecting rod that is made of one of forged material, a cast material and a sintered material.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, further comprising a small end portion and a large end portion, wherein the large end portion includes the valley and the fracture starting point groove .

Claim 9 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, further comprising a rod portion and a cap portion.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the fracture starting point groove includes a pair of the fracture starting point grooves provided on the inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 10, wherein the angle between the predetermined fracture plane and the valley is approximately 45 degrees.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 11, wherein an interior angle of the valley is approximately 90 degrees.

Claim 13 (canceled).

Claim 14 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein a cross section of the valley is larger than a cross section of the fracture starting point groove.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the valley includes a pair of sloped portions.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 15, wherein the sloped portions define chamfers for guiding a bi-partitioned bearing metal element that is inserted into the crank-pin hole.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 15, wherein the sloped portions have curved shapes.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 15, wherein the sloped portions have swelled, rounded shapes.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the valley has a concave shape in an upper corner between the fracture starting point groove and an inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The split connecting rod according to claim 1, wherein the valley has a rectilinear shape in an upper corner between the fracture starting point groove and an inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole.

Claim 21 (canceled).

Claim 22 (currently amended): The split connecting rod according to claim ~~24~~1, wherein a depth H from the inner circumferential surface of the crank-pin hole to a bottom portion of the bottom surface and the radius R are set such that a ratio H/R is about 1.0 to about 10.0.

Claim 23 (previously presented): An engine comprising the split connecting rod according to claim 1.

Claim 24 (previously presented): A vehicle comprising the split connecting rod according to claim 1.

Claims 25-32 (canceled).